

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 07250

USICA FOR EU

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPN, SCUL, OEXC, UR
SUBJECT: MINISTER OF CULTURE DEMICHEV "REAFFIRMS" YURIY
LYUBIMOV AS TAGANKA THEATER DIRECTOR

REF: (A) MOSCOW A-60 (NOTAL), (B) MOSCOW 4495 (NOTAL),
(C) MOSCOW 4785 (NOTAL), (D) PARIS 9585 (NOTAL), (E) MOSCOW
7108 (NOTAL)

1. TAGANKA THEATER DIRECTOR YURIY PETROVICH LYUBIMOV HAS
BEEN ASSURED BY MINISTER OF CULTURE DEMICHEV THAT THE
CONTROVERSY OVER HIS NOW CANCELLED STAGING OF "THE
QUEEN OF SPADES" AT THE PARIS OPERA NEED NOT IMPINGE ON
THE THEATER'S CONTINUED WORK UNDER HIS DIRECTION. THE
THEATER'S PLANNED TRIP TO ITALY LATER THIS YEAR IS
HOWEVER, IN DOUBT. ON THE OTHER HAND, LYUBIMOV'S STAGING
A PLAY FOR THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER MAY NOW BE
MORE FEASIBLE THAN BEFORE THE BROUHAHA OF THE PAST WEEKS.

2. SUMMONED TO DEMICHEV'S OFFICE ON APRIL 7, LYUBIMOV
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MET WITH THE MINISTER ALONE, AND AFTER WHAT SEEMS TO
HAVE BEEN A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE ABORTED PRODUCTION OF
"THE QUEEN OF SPADES" FOR THE PARIS OPERA, IT WAS AGREED
THAT THIS EPISODE WAS IN THE PAST. "TEMPER'NADO RABOTAT",
DEMICHEV TOLD LYUBIMOV. ASKED WHAT THIS HEARTY
EXHORTATION MEANT IN REAL TERMS, LYUBIMOV TOLD THE P & C
COUNSELOR THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE "AS BEFORE" IN DIRECTING

HIS THEATER'S ARTISTIC PROGRAM. HIS OFFICE AT THAT MOMENT WAS STREWN WITH VARIOUS PAPERS RELATING TO A STAGING HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE PREPARING OF CHECHOV'S STORIES. OBVIOUSLY, LYUBIMOV FELT REASSURED THAT HE COULD CONTINUE WORKING IN MOSCOW AND IN HIS OWN THEATER TO STAGE HIS CHARACTERISTICALLY INNOVATIVE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE RUSSIAN CLASSICS.

3. AS FOR THE PLANNED TOUR OF ITALY BY THE TAGANKA THEATER, LYUBIMOV SAID THAT THE MINISTRY WAS STILL DEBATING IT. MEANWHILE, THE MINISTER HAD REAFFIRMED LYUBIMOV'S PERSONAL TRAVEL TO ITALY SOME TIME IN 1978 TO DISCUSS WITH CLAUDIO ABADDO HIS STAGING OF MUSSORGSKIY'S "KHOVANSCHINA" FOR LA SCALA. ASKED WHETHER HE WAS EXPRESSING THIS GUARDED OPINION ABOUT THE THEATER'S TOUR OF ITALY BECAUSE OF WHAT DEMICHEV SAID, LYUBIMOV WOULDN'T SAY NO, REITERATING THAT DEMICHEV HAD TOLD HIM TO CARRY ON WITH IT AT THE THEATER IN MOSCOW. THE "QUEEN OF SPADES" INCIDENT WAS IN THE PAST, AND ONE WOULD SEE WHAT THE FUTURE BROUGHT.

4. COUNSELOR ASKED WHETHER LYUBIMOV HAD SEEN THE APRIL 7 "SOVYETSKAYA KULTURA" ARTICLE BY "UNITA" MOSCOW BUREAU CHIEF CARLO BENEDETTI, ENTITLED "WHO IS DISPLEASED; SOVIET-ITALIAN CULTURAL RELATIONS AND THEIR OPPONENTS." NO, LYUBIMOV HAD NOT SEEN IT. BENEDETTI MANAGED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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DISCUSS RELATIONS BETWEEN LA SCALA AND THE USSR WITHOUT MENTIONING LYUBIMOV'S NAME, TO BEWAIL THAT ONLY MOSCOW'S SATIRE THEATER HAD VISITED ITALY (NOT REFERRING TO A PLANNED VISIT OF THE TAGANKA THEATER), AND HAD LISTED THE BEST PLAYS ON THE MOSCOW THEATER SCENE DURING THE SEASON COMMEMORATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION WITHOUT MENTIONING A SINGLE ONE AT THE TAGANKA, LYUBIMOV READ THE COUNSELOR'S CLIPPING OF THE ARTICLE WITH SLOWLY REDDENING FACE. HE WOULD NOT, NEVERTHELESS, SPECULATE WHETHER BENEDETTI'S ARTICLE OFFERED REAL EVIDENCE THAT THE TAGANKA THEATER'S SCHEDULED TOUR OF ITALY WOULD BE POSTPONED.

4. ADMITTING THAT HIS AVAILABILITY WOULD DEPEND ON WHETHER THE TAGANKA WOULD TOUR ITALY IN 1978, LYUBIMOV THEN DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE WOULD, IN FACT, BE ABLE TO DEVOTE HIS SUMMER VACATION TO STAGING A PLAY FOR PERFORMANCE AT THE ACT. DEMICHEV HAD SPENT SOME TIME WITH HIM, LYUBIMOV TOLD THE COUNSELOR, IN TALKING OVER THE ACT'S PROPOSAL. ACCORDING TO LYUBIMOV, HE WAS ASSURED THAT THE "QUEEN OF SPADES" EPISODE WOULD NOT INTRUDE ON THE MINISTRY'S EVALUATION OF ACT'S PROPOSITION

THAT LYUBIMOV STAGE A PLAY IN SAN FRANCISCO. COUNSELOR ASSURED LYUBIMOV THAT ACT'S MARKSON AND BALL WOULD BE ARRIVING ON APRIL 18TH PREPARED TO DISCUSS WHOLE MATTER WITH MINISTRY OF CULTURE. LYUBIMOV IS STILL NOT PREPARED TO STATE--AT LEAST NOT TO P & C COUNSELOR--THAT HE COULD STAGE A PLAY IN ONE SITTING, AS IT WERE. SINCE IT NOW SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE TO TRAVEL TO SAN FRANCISCO FOR THE PRELIMINARY 10-15 DAYS PRIOR TO THE LATER MONTH OR SO HE FEELS IS NECESSARY FOR STAGING THE PLAY, LYUBIMOV NOW

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MOSCOW 07250

SPECULATES ON THE PRACTICALITY OF BEGINNING PREPARATIONS DURING HIS AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER VACATION, THEN RETURNING IN EARLY 1979 FOR 10-15 DAYS OF POLISHING PRIOR TO THE PREMIER.

5. DETAILS REMAIN FOR THE ACT TEAM TO DISCUSS IN MOSCOW BEGINNING ON APRIL 18. AFTER THE RATHER TENSE SITUATION AT THE TAGANKA THEATER THESE PAST WEEKS, THE ATMOSPHERE THERE SEEMS TO HAVE LIFTED SOMEWHAT AFTER LYUBIMOV'S APRIL 7 MEETING WITH DEMICHEV. IT MAY VERY WELL BE THAT, THOUGH THE PLANNED ITALIAN TOUR OF THE TAGANKA THEATER IS OUT, LYUBIMOV HIMSELF WILL BE ALLOWED TO SPEND HIS VACATION STAGING A PLAY FOR SAN FRANCISCO'S ACT. TOON

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